Nation
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Blueboy resigns

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editorial

Canada opposes ban on genocide of indigenous peoples

by Will Nicholls

Dickens started off his classic novel *A Tale of Two Cities* with the timeless sentence, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Perhaps that statement can sum up what most North American First Nations peoples felt on September 13. Certainly, most of the world's indigenous peoples felt a lot better than that.

Hailed as a victory for indigenous rights around the world, the declaration passed with a vote of 143-4 with 11 abstentions. The four naysayers were Canada, United States, Australia and New Zealand – all countries, not surprisingly, with significant Native minorities.

The Declaration spells out the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples, including their right to traditional lands and resources; their right to give their free, prior, and informed consent before governments take actions that negatively affect them.

Both of these points, says the Canadian government through Indian and Northern Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl, are inconsistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights. Or, he says, are impractical because consulting with 650 recognized First Nations is too difficult; or can't happen because non-indigenous Canadians must be protected.

The Canadian government was silent on the Declaration's clause guaranteeing freedom from genocide and forced relocation, or rights to indigenous languages, cultures and spiritual beliefs.

The Declaration took longer to write than any other United Nations international agreement, finally going to the vote after 25 years. During this time indigenous people complained their peoples were continuing to be killed, villages were still being razed, their people displaced, and their lands and resources appropriated.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the Declaration "marks a historic moment when UN member states and indigenous peoples reconciled with their painful histories and resolved to move forward together on the path of human rights, justice and development for all."

Unfortunately, Canada is not in step with the rest of the world. The Harper government marches to the beat of a different drum.

Chief Stewart Philip, of BC's Leadership Council said, "It is truly ironic that the four First World countries that have become prosperous through the exploitation of the lands and resources of the indigenous people, including Canada, chose to oppose the adoption of the Declaration."

Mary Simon, president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, while in New York, said it was a proud day but the negative vote put a black mark on Canada.

Grand Chief Edward John of the Tl'azt'en Nation, speaking for the AFN, said Canada cannot present itself as a champion and promoter of human rights internationally while "in its own back yard it votes against the human rights of indigenous peoples."

Lez Mayer, chair of the Global Indigenous Caucus, was even more scathing when he said, "In this case, Canada and the others are finding themselves in a situation where their policies are being found out, and are showing they are not prepared to commit themselves to fair treatment of indigenous peoples in their countries."

Canada also overstepped the bounds of decency when, according to the African Indigenous Caucus, it tried to use international aid as a bribe to convince other countries to reject the Declaration. "Canada was committing a crime," said one caucus co-coordinator.

Meanwhile, the Grand Council of the Crees is curiously silent on Canada's no vote. After all, the present government is doing okay by the Crees – at least if the present new relationship is ratified.

Canada has protected its non-indigenous population quite well. They have less people below the poverty line, less suicides, a lower rate of diabetes (over 16 per cent for Crees compared to Quebec's rate of 3 per cent), less overcrowding in houses, a far lower percentage of the population in jail compared to non-Natives, lower unemployment rates, and fewer children in foster homes, and on, and on, and so on.

If only Canada could remember that the First Nations population needs some protecting as well. Perhaps in another 25 years we will see Canada finally sign on and understand the necessity of the UN Declaration.

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cover photo: Will Nicholls

Take my editor... please

Sometimes the old adage, "the customer is always right," still applies. For example, one visibly outraged customer complained to me that I wasn't funny enough to meet his demands to make him laugh.

I quickly retorted "humph!" and left him still fuming. Not funny eh, we'll see who's not funny around here. In a hiss, I left.

I was mad as hell. But after thinking for awhile, I noticed that in the good old days, I would have retorted with a clever-yet-funny anecdote, just so the customer can get what he's paying for – a laugh. But no, I went the other route, snapping back with a vengeance instead of a rib tickler.

What's with me these days? I quickly interrogated a staff member of *the Nation* magazine and discovered that yes, sadly, I just wasn't funny anymore.

In a quandary and puzzled to heck, I couldn't come back with another doozie to dazzle the most unimpressionable minds. Then I thought back in time to when I got that fateful call from the head of the then only locally famous *Nation* Magazine (before they went international). "Hey dude, we need your words on paper for the 'notes. Think you can do it for now?"

"Sure, why not?" I replied. With visions of Pulitzers dancing around my dreams for awhile, I agreed like the ignoramus I was in those days. Easy, I thought, 600 words twice a month. A fifth grader could do it.

Well, that "for now" turned into more years than I can remember; in other words, more than six. I've seen my share of funny, perplexing, idiotic and maniacal things, enough to carry me every two weeks for all that time.

But now it seems funny things aren't popping up as much as I need in order to write funny on a biweekly basis. Heck, now people who need their funny bone tickled have stopped stalking me on the streets for a spiel of jokes and riddles.

Instead, the casual bystander now often requires a few coins just to pretend to go along with my lame jokes. I'm plumb out of gags and quaint sayings and thinking about it even more, I realized that I'm now regarded as a professional funny man who must deliver, whether I like it or not.

Well, I called my lawyer, who used to work and give advice to OJ Simpson, and realized that I was practically driven like the slaves who built the pyramids for the last several years without a break! JC (OJ's lawyer, the one who defended him through a famous murder trial before OJ became just an alleged armed robber) advised me, through a séance (because I think he died awhile back), that I could sue for a vacation at least once a year. A vacation? What's that? Nobody ever took a break working for the pharaoh.

Armed with this knowledge that I could sue someone for a pittance, I hung up on JC, patted the exhausted and sweating seer on his back and wrote up a writ to my pharaoh.

Hey, give me a break okay? Slaves can't produce forever at this back-breaking, mind-wracking pace; they need their staff and wheat too.

So I proposed to the Son of the Sun to give me a two-week break until the next rez notes have to be produced and I'll be back to being funny again. And for those faithful readers who keep me going with their encouraging words ... thanks.

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Abraham Rupert: no regrets

Defeated Chisasibi chief vows to continue environmental battle

by Steve Bonspiel

Two of the three chiefs most identified as environmental activists in elected Cree politics have been recently forced from office, one by an election loss and the other by term limits.

Abraham Rupert served Chisasibi for six years. He led his people through the Paix des Braves referendum, in which his community was the only one of the nine to vote against the agreement, through to the most recent referendum in November 2006 that saw his people turn thumbs down to the Rupert River diversion.

The other third of the trio, known for their publicity campaigns to save the Rupert, is ex-Waskaganish Chief Robert Weistche. He was forced out by his community's two-term limit for chief.

Nemaska's Josie Jimiken is the remaining "green" chief.

Rupert leaves a legacy of standing up for his community and always being there to listen to their concerns.

"During my two terms as chief I look back and I think I can honestly say I have no regrets," Rupert said. "I spoke for and stood for what I believe in, what I said came from what my people told me. I had the honour of serving two terms as chief."

Roderick Pachanos beat him in the August election by 90 votes. Rupert accepts the results and said that the people have spoken.

"It doesn't matter how many candidates you have running for chief, you all have one goal in mind and that is to help the people," he said. "I had my time."

Rupert continued his fight for the Rupert River September 14 at a demonstration in front of Hydro Quebec's Montreal office organized by non-native environmental groups Les Foundations Rivieres and Rupert Reverence. He said the fight is far from over and his new position out of office will help him voice more of his opinions.

"Some impacts from La Grande took a long time to show," he said. "I think we're at the stage where the community of Chisasibi understands fully what the impacts of the project are and how it affects the community physically and spiritually."

Rupert said that the effects of the new project would not be seen for many years, which would be too late to reverse severe impacts on the land and wildlife.

"In the 1975 agreement there is a guaranteed level of harvest," he continued. "Which means when I go hunting the harvest level of 30 years ago should be the same thing today. That is not the case. Along the coast, the eelgrass that the migratory birds fed on used to be abundant 30 years ago. But now that plant just doesn't grow. That has not been addressed and I think it needs to be. It affects our traditional way of life."

He also talked about the ice conditions being affected because of the diversion. He lamented that lives could be lost as people travel on the river by skidoo and run into danger spots.

"The rivers are the lifelines of the people," said Rupert. "Many different things have changed because of the 1975 agreement. People no longer use the river as they did just 35 years ago. When you reduce a river's flow by 70 to 80 per cent, there are going to be changes. They might not show up right away, but as we have seen through experience, it's inevitable."

Abraham Rupert

I think we're at the stage where the community of Chisasibi understands fully what the impacts of the project are and how it affects the community physically and spiritually.

• • •

Rupert said that instead of damming another river, there are viable alternatives like wind power.

"Chisasibi has been collecting data for a little over three years now. The numbers are showing that it is economically viable to produce energy from windmills," said Rupert, of the Hydro-Quebec-approved project that would see up to 200 megawatts of electricity produced annually.

Rupert has confidence in Josie Jimiken, knowing full well that if push comes to shove, he is ready to fight for what he believes in.

"I believe that Josie is the kind of person who will fight this to the end," he said. "There won't be three voices, just one, but it can still be really strong. He believes what I believe that it's too great a price and we will lose too much. I believe in him."

Wachiya!

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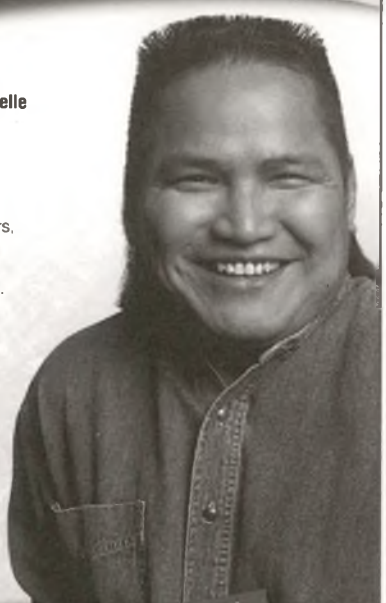

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Waskaganish Chief Blueboy resigns abruptly

Cites 'resistance' to leadership; special election to be called soon

By Steve Bonspiel

In a strange twist to the August 14 election in Waskaganish, newly elected Chief Gordon Blueboy resigned his post less than a month after winning the position due to "resistance" to his leadership, among other reasons.

Blueboy, who faxed a statement to his constituents and to *the Nation*, would not comment directly on the matter.

Incumbent Chief Robert Weistche was unable to run because of the current two-term limit, leaving the race wide open between Blueboy and other candidates, including second-place finisher Simeon Trapper and Ian Diamond, former chief Billy Diamond's son.

"From the beginning of my time in office, I felt that there was resistance to my leadership," Blueboy said in his prepared statement. "On various occasions my authority as chief was undermined. It appeared that there was division and an unwillingness to work together professionally for the betterment of the community and its members."

Blueboy handed in his resignation on September 10 at a chief and council meeting.

"In addition to these reasons," Blueboy added, "I believe the lack of support provided made it impossible to ensure that the office of the Chief could function properly or effectively which would only serve to harm the community and people."

He continued, "I hope that my abrupt departure as Chief will motivate all members of the Crees of the Waskaganish First Nation to become very concerned about the serious issues negatively affecting our community and that you will take positive actions towards resolving the problems."

He went on to clarify that his resignation had nothing to do with his ability to work with others, family problems or threats.

Although it is unclear what these problems were, it is unprecedented in Eeyou Istchee for a chief to resign less than a month after being elected. It is true that the community of Waskaganish has seen turbulent times recently, with incidents such as the theft of hundreds of thousands of dollars from the housing fund.

But one band council member implied that Blueboy didn't give the new council a chance to work together.

"When there is a change in leadership it really requires a change of not only the council, but the staff that has to go through a transition as well," said Deputy Chief Steve Diamond, who is now interim chief. "Every leader has a different style. I had to change as well. Saying no one is willing to work with you is lumping everyone into one basket so to speak."

Diamond also said most of the council is newly elected, which he saw as a way to freshen up the situation.

"Most of the council did everything to accommodate the new chief," said Diamond. "There was excitement and enthusiasm and we looked forward to going in a new direction."

Diamond would not comment directly on certain inflammatory parts of the statement, adding that he has not had a chance to clarify with Blueboy some of the issues brought up within it.

"I can't argue if what he said was true or untrue," he said. "There are strengths and weaknesses of every organization. It's up to us as leaders to maximize the strength and work on fixing the weaknesses."

Diamond said the whole incident has taken a toll on him as Deputy Chief and because of flooding recently in the community; the council has not yet had a chance to deal with the situation.

> IT APPEARED THAT THERE WAS DIVISION AND AN UNWILLINGNESS TO WORK TOGETHER PROFESSIONALLY FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE COMMUNITY AND ITS MEMBERS.

Returning Officer John Henry Wapachee said the situation is strange. "It hasn't happened before. "Only in the case when a chief was forced to resign, but a chief coming in for a couple of weeks... that's something I've never seen."

He said the next step is another election, in due time, but he is not sure if he will be the returning officer this time around. "It's only normal to see that it goes back to the people again for them to make another decision. This is a situation we don't normally see," said Wapachee, who has been a returning officer for 18 years.

Numerous calls to Blueboy's residence went unreturned.

Waskaganish is expected to call another election in October to fill the now-vacant position of chief.

Former Chief Robert Weistche was reached by *the Nation* before Blueboy's resignation. He praised Blueboy, saying he was a good candidate to lead the community of approximately 2,000 people. Weistche lamented the fact that he could not run again due to the community's two-term limit, but he did not rule out running again in four years.

Blueboy concluded his statement by saying, "I have been known to stand for the principles of honesty, accountability and transparency in leadership. I continue to stand for these principles."

"He's a good man, a person of integrity," said Diamond. "I worked with him before and I don't think he does things for selfish reasons. He believes he had to resign and I can't argue if his reasons were valid or not."

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Survivors' cheques in the mail

Canada has formalized a landmark compensation deal for an estimated 80,000 former residential school students.

The largest class-action lawsuit in Canadian history came into effect September 19. Assembly of First Nations Chief Phil Fontaine called it a "journey of tears, hardship and pain – but also of tremendous struggle and accomplishment."

Payments will be mailed out to those who have filled out the appropriate forms, which could take up to a month or more. Individual cases who have opted out of the class-action suit can still go ahead on their own. Many are not happy with the amount awarded. The sum of $1.9 billion averages out to less than $30,000 for each survivor, depending on the amount of time spent at the 130 different schools across the country.

"This is an important day. It is a day of celebration. It is a perhaps, and I don't want to overstate this, even a turning point in the history of our nation," said Fontaine.

Former students endured sexual, physical and mental abuse at the schools, which were run by churches and funded by the federal government.

Harper nixes rights declaration

The international community adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples September 13 over the objections of countries, such as Canada, which have large Aboriginal populations.

The U.S., Australia and New Zealand also voted against the non-binding agreement at the UN General Assembly that sets out human rights standards for Indigenous populations.

Canada had "significant concerns" over the declaration's wording on provisions addressing lands and resources, along with better measures of Indigenous consent before enacting new laws.

Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl claimed that Aboriginal people are already protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and that the new declaration conflicts with the existing one.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said in the past that he is uncomfortable with the wording of the document and that Canada would not sign it in its current form.

Mommy milk is best

Mommies with newborn babies are encouraged to find out more about the natural relationship between mother and child in the first week of October during breastfeeding week. This year's theme, "Breastfeeding: Nature's Way," is set up to promote, protect and support breastfeeding.

"It is well established that breastfeeding helps protect babies and mothers against many diseases and infections," states a Cree Health Board press release.

For the first time event in Eeyou Istchee, the Cree Health Board is hoping to raising awareness and increase the rate and duration of breastfeeding among the Cree population in Eeyou Istchee to help maintain health.

"Breastfeeding week will occur the first week of October, the 40th week of the year, because it represents the first week of life when breastfeeding is initiated after nine months of pregnancy," said the press release.

During this event, the nutritionists, community health representatives and nurses of the nine communities will help organize different activities to promote breastfeeding. Also, there will be a breastfeeding challenge, reuniting as many mothers and babies as possible to have them breastfeed at the same time to demonstrate how breastfeeding is important to them.

Inuit cruise lines

photo by Holly Varey, courtesy of Cruise North Expeditions

The Inuit in Nunavut, northern Quebec and northern Labrador could soon be running a joint Arctic cruise line that would bring people up to visit one of the most beautiful areas in the world.

Most people prefer to head south to hotter climates, but the Inuit are banking on easier access through the Northwest passage that would enable larger ships to reach remote destinations.

Cruise North Expeditions, owned by the Makivik Corporation, currently offers summer cruises through Nunavik and Nunavut.

If the three Inuit groups pool their resources, they could expand Cruise North's business and either purchase their own ship or lease another vessel, or both. A joint partnership could boost the number of Inuit working on the cruise ships from the current level of 14 out of 60.

A decision on the new cruise line is slated for the fall.

feature

The 10-year clause

Little known section of JBNQA has huge impacts on past and future of Crees living outside Eeyou Istchee

By Steve Bonspiel

When the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement was negotiated in 1974-75, a key sticking point concerned the question of when a Cree individual would lose their rights to a paid education and certain health benefits after they moved away from Eeyou Istchee. Quebec and Canada said those rights would be lost immediately, but the Crees fought for a respite of 10 years.

The Crees were assured that the JBNQA would change their lives for the better, but they would only enjoy all its benefits if they stayed within their negotiated borders. The Cree, however, were steadfast and insisted upon a 10-year hiatus to allow a Cree to attend school, gain life experience or work for off-reserve Cree entities without losing their treaty rights.

Other Native treaties were signed across the country that included a clause eliminating benefits for individuals the second they moved away from their territory. Their rights only applied when they were living on the reserve.

But the Cree negotiators at the time successfully argued that 10 years was a more appropriate timetable, citing the extenuating circumstances of students, civil servants working for the Grand Council of the Crees and long-term patients. The 10-year clause, as it became known, extends to all Crees, regardless of their reason to leave Eeyou Istchee.

These treaty rights should also not be confused with beneficiary numbers that stay with a Cree person their whole life.

In other words, if you've been out of the territory for more than 10 years, you might be covered to go to certain colleges as a registered Indian and have your tuition paid for, but attending college at UCLA in California, for example, would not be fully covered because the cost is over and above what Indian Affairs is willing to pay.

All is not lost, however, if someone decides to move away. There is a loophole that allows a person who has been away for 10 years to regain their extensive rights, which include full coverage of their tuition at a school abroad. All they would have to do is live in Eeyou Istchee for a six-month period to qualify for another 10 years to do what they need to with the full support of the Cree School Board and Cree Health Board. There is no limit as to how many times this can be done, according to Bill Namagoose, Executive Director of the Grand Council of the Crees.

"We're talking treaty rights here; we're not talking about Aboriginal programs run by Indian Affairs," said Namagoose. "Those apply across Canada and don't have territorial application. Treaty rights do."

CIVIL SERVANTS WORKING FOR CREE ENTITIES, STUDENTS AND MEDICAL PATIENTS IN THE SOUTH SHOULD NOT BE COVERED BY THIS CLAUSE.

He is currently leading the fight to get an exemption from the 10-year clause for people who, like himself, are based in the city because of work, as well as students and long-term hospital patients. He hopes the issue can be settled soon, and he knows that the GCC has Ottawa's attention after the $1.4 billion deal signed with Canada July 16.

"We're looking at the already accepted Inuit model," Namagoose told *the Nation*. "That's why I think we'll be able to come up with a solution because Ottawa is already doing the same thing for them. Civil servants working for Cree entities, students and medical patients in the south should not be covered by this clause."

The Cree School Board might pick up the tab for tuition at a prestigious institution, but if it has been 10 years since a Cree lived in one of the nine communities, they would have to move back to their community for a period of six months before regaining their rights. The same could be said for Crees who were born and raised outside of Eeyou Istchee who never lived in the territory. They would have to stay in one of the nine communities in Eeyou Istchee to gain more extensive rights.

Namagoose said that the six-month period to regain individual rights was adopted from the province's policy on Quebec residency to vote in provincial elections. The Crees argued that an immigrant could land in Canada seven months before an election and be eligible to cast their ballot. They asked for the same rules and got it.

Cory Holland

The affected

Cory Holland, 31, always dreamed of playing in the NHL. He played hockey every day as a kid in Havelock, Ontario, and he excelled at the sport. His parents supported him fully and he eventually made a career out of it, playing in semi-professional and professional leagues, most recently with the Laval Chiefs of the North American Hockey League.

But something always hung over his head. He didn't know his real father. As a kid he never thought a lot about it and never had plans to meet with him. But as he got older, Holland started to look at it differently.

His mother used to live in Chisasibi, where she found work at a restaurant on Fort George Island. That was when she met Daniel Martinhunter. They were together for a few years and she bore two children, Holland and a younger sister. Things did not work out, so his mother Brenda packed up and took the kids with her.

In elementary school Holland paid the price for his distinct looks. The kids would call him derogatory names and he got into fights almost daily.

"The kids knew I was Indian growing up," Holland told *the Nation*. "They would call me wagon burner and spear chucker. I don't remember most of the names they would call me. That happened every day and I would get beat up. I remember when I was young I'd get so mad I'd cry. I was the only Native in the school; there was no rez around where I grew up. So I had to learn to fight at a young age."

His quick fists helped him develop into a tough hockey player, a bruiser who would protect other players when needed.

He was drafted by Oshawa of the OHL at age 17 and moved around many times from hockey city to hockey city. He took the anger he had towards those kids and made a career out of it.

During his years as a hockey nomad, Holland started to wonder about his real father. He wanted to know what he looked like, to see what kind of racism his father dealt with growing up. Most of all, he wanted to meet his father in the flesh.

Holland called his father two years ago and asked if he would be open to meeting him. They decided to meet at the Bell Centre where Holland was playing for the Sorel Mission of the North American Hockey League. It was an emotional night.

"I felt shy," he said. "I felt happy, but hesitant too. My brother and two of my sisters were there, so it was overwhelming. It was a very emotional time. When I look back on it now, I wish I had done it sooner. I missed a lot of time. But I can't change that."

Holland's father wouldn't even come up to him at first. "He was very shy," said Holland. "He was hiding in the back and my sisters had to come up to me. They asked if I knew who they were and because they looked Native, I said, 'We're related, eh?' And they said 'We're your sisters.'"

After a few tears and some laughs, they went for supper and briefly caught up on the 29 years they missed. They invited Holland to Chisasibi.

Once he got there he quickly realized he'd made the right choice. Family from all over town took turns housing and feeding their newfound relative. He was overjoyed and he almost could not believe the reception he got.

"I was always kept busy by my family, whether it was sleeping over at someone's house or going to dinners or hanging out. Up there it's more family oriented, not as materialistic as down south. It's a lot more relaxed."

When he left he vowed he would return. But it wasn't only his family's love that brought him back this past winter. It was also a financial decision as he looked toward life after his professional hockey career.

Holland wanted to go back to school to become a fireman, but hefty costs for tuition, books and travel were discouraging. He soon found out from his father about the stipulation in the JBNQA that he would need to stay in Chisasibi for six months before he was eligible. He applied and was accepted at Seneca College in Toronto.

"I was kind of nervous," he said. "It was my first time ever being on the reserve and staying there for six months. But I had lots of family and they really helped me a lot. I met a lot of interesting people. The transition was slow at first, but I got more comfortable and I had a good time."

While Holland was in Chisasibi, he worked as a gym monitor. "It was perfect for me because I got to do all the sports activities."

He also hunted, fished and learned more about his Cree background. He even picked up some Cree words and hopes to one day speak to his father in the Cree language.

Holland was out in the bush one day with Irvin Stewart. They were heading to LG 3 to fish when they spotted a small herd of caribou. Irvin asked him if he ever shot a caribou and he said no. Holland smiled and looked back at him. He knew he was going to get his chance.

"It was as easy as that. So we pulled over and I shot one. It must have been a gut shot because it didn't die right away. There were so many caribou and they all took off together and I lost the one I shot. So I saw another one, shot it too and it fell. Then as I walked up to it, I saw the original one lying on the ground. So two shots and two kills. It felt pretty good."

After all the years of wondering who he was and where he came from, Holland had come home. When people ask him who he is, Holland never hesitates with the answer.

"I say I'm Cree or half Cree. I always make sure I mention that. I'm aware and proud. I don't deny it and I've never been ashamed of it. Sometimes I felt like I should be ashamed of it or something by the way people used to tease me, but I'm not."

After finishing his residency requirements and attending school with the help of the CSB, Holland hopes his new career as a fireman will bring him back to fight fires in the place where he was born.

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Valerie Brown

From Labrador to Eeyou Istchee

Growing up in Labrador City, Valerie Brown, 34, always knew she was Cree. Her mother is Cree and her father is a Newfoundlander. Her unique look always drew stares from her non-native friends because she was the only person of a different colour within her circle.

"I only spoke Cree until I was three years old; I had problems learning English," she said.

"Then my mother stopped speaking Cree to us, I think because of what happened in residential school and how she was taught not to."

Brown lived in Eastmain for the past six months until early September, slowly relearning the Cree she forgot long ago. "I have a CD that teaches you how to speak Cree and I have been listening to it when I get a chance."

Brown's other siblings, John and Denise, have come back to the community and have kids who are being raised immersed in everything Cree; The language, the culture and the traditions. The reason Brown came back, however, was much different.

After working for 10 years as a bartender and then moving on to a job at the Rona hardware store, Brown knew she needed something more tangible in her life. When the opportunity to take a two-year course to become a mining technician reared its head, Brown was excited at the chance to do something interesting and make good money.

She soon realized, however, that the course would cost $1,400 a semester, plus books and other supplies, over and above her living expenses. That was money she did not have. So she explored her options.

"The reason I moved up here is that I have been working this past year upgrading my high school marks to get into this mining technician course," said Brown. "After I qualified for the course I had to find funding. I applied to the Cree School Board for funding, but was rejected because of the 10-year clause."

She got word a little more than six months from the start of school. A few days later she packed up her stuff, left her boyfriend and friends behind and headed to Eastmain, a place she had previously only visited.

She soon found a job at Human Resources as an office assistant in Eastmain, but the adjustment to life in one of the smallest Cree communities – population, 600 – was difficult at first.

"The community of Eastmain is beautiful, the people are friendly and the community pulls together if anyone needs help," said Brown, who volunteered one day to help with a big community clean up.

"But I really missed my friends and boyfriend back home. I was kind of sad at first," said Brown, who also lamented the loss of her busy sports schedule with softball and a provincial women's ball hockey team.

As a child she would stay in Eastmain with her grandparents David and Daisy Cheezo. She returned at 12 and in her 20s and always knew that she would continue to come back to visit her family. She just didn't know it would be for six months.

Once she got over the separation anxiety, Brown began to learn more of the traditional Cree way of life. "I cooked goose in a teepee with my grandmother when I was 12. We did that again. I also learned how to make bannock during the cultural days at school. Every year there is a traditional walk between elders and youngsters and I participated in that," said Brown.

She had a lot to cram into a short six-month stint, but she was learning about her identity more than ever before.

"My mom told me stories on how she grew up and what she had to do in order to survive. She was born in a teepee, she had to chop wood and boil her water in order to wash her clothes. She also went to residential school."

After her schooling at College of the North Atlantic, Brown will be a fully certified mining technician. Among many other new skills she will learn how to weld and operate a crane.

Then she will begin her job in earnest at a mine owned by the Iron Ore Company of Canada, a job she sees as a way to better her life.

"I wanted to be more positive in life and to learn Cree. This was one of the ways to do that. I am very excited and I know I'll be back in Eastmain really soon!"

THE COMMUNITY OF EASTMAIN IS BEAUTIFUL, THE PEOPLE ARE FRIENDLY AND THE COMMUNITY PULLS TOGETHER IF ANYONE NEEDS HELP.

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GCC Canada CRA/ARC

NOTICE OF REFERENDUM

1. On July 16, 2007, Grand Chief Matthew Mukash of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, on behalf of the Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, announced that the Chief Federal Negotiator and the Chief Cree Negotiator had concluded, subject to approvals by Canada and by the Cree, a proposed *Agreement concerning a New Relationship between the Government of Canada and the Cree of Eeyou Istchee* (the proposed Agreement).
2. Notice is hereby given of a vote by Referendum of the Cree on whether to approve the proposed Agreement.
3. The Referendum Question will be as follows: *Do you approve the proposed Agreement concerning a New Relationship between the Government ofCanada and the Cree of Eeyou Istchee?* **Yes/No**.
4. Any person whose name appears on the Register of Cree beneficiaries maintained by the Province of Quebec pursuant to Sub-section 3.5 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) and who is at least eighteen (18) years of age on the last day of the Referendum Period (namely, October 12, 2007) is an Eligible Voter in this Referendum. An Eligible Voters List has been established. Any person may enquire of Mr. Frederick Moar, Local Referendum Officer, at the address, phone/fax numbers ore-mail address listed at point 14 of this Notice, to find out if their name is on the Eligible Voters List.
5. If you believe you meet the criteria to be an Eligible Voter, but your name does not appear on the Eligible Voters List, this may be because your name also did not appear on the Register of Cree beneficiaries maintained by the Province of Quebec. If you nevertheless wish to vote in this Referendum, you must apply to the Quebec Registrar of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement Beneficiaries for inscription of your status as a Cree beneficiary under the JBNQA. ***Prompt attention to making such application is imperative***. While the Referendum Committee is making representations to the Quebec Registrar to give due attention to the timely processing of such applications, the Referendum Committee does not control the process of inscription on the Quebec Register. Any applications for inscription on the Quebec Register that are approved prior to the first principal polling day, October 1, 2007, will result in a similar addition of that person's name to the Eligible Voters List for this Referendum. Inquiries for inscription of a person's status as a Cree beneficiary on the Quebec Register may be directed as follows: **Referendum 2007 Office for Registration of Cree Beneficiaries of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement**, 81 Metcalfe Street, Suite 900, Ottawa Ontario K1P 6K7 Telephone toll-free: 1-888-761-1655
6. The Referendum Period will begin on August 6, 2007 and end on October 12, 2007, unless extended by the Chief Referendum Officer in accordance with the Referendum Rules as a result of a rescheduling of any poll due to unforeseen circumstances.
7. English and French versions of the proposed Agreement, a summary of it and other materials relevant to the Referendum may be viewed on the website of the GCC(EI) http://www.gcc.ca/ or printed copies obtained by contacting Mr. Frederick Moar, Local Referendum Officer, at the address, phone/fax numbers or e-mail address listed at point 14 of this Notice.
8. During the period between August 13, 2007 and September 28, 2007, information sessions will be held in each of the Cree communities, at the GCC(EI) offices in Montreal and Ottawa and at such other locations as the Referendum Committee may determine. The Local Referendum Officer will post the date and location of the information session to be held in his or her community or the polling centre for which he/she is responsible. This may be subject to rescheduling or delay of start time by the Chief Referendum Officer due to unforeseen circumstances. For a complete list of locations, dates, addresses and times of all information sessions, consult the website of the GCC(EI) or call the toll free number listed at point 14 of this Notice.
9. Eligible Voters may vote by Mail-In Ballot **at any time during the Referendum Period, provided their ballot is returned by the close of polls on the last roving poll day, October 12, 2007**. To obtain a Mail-In Ballot Package, including further instructions on how to exercise a Mail-In Ballot, please contact Mr. Frederick Moar, Local Referendum Officer, at the address, phone/fax numbers or e-mail address listed at point 14 of this Notice.
10. Alternatively, Eligible Voters may vote at a polling centre on any of five "principal polling days", from October 1, 2007 to October 5, 2007 from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. or such extended hours as may be ordered for any or all locations by the Chief Referendum Officer in accordance with the Referendum Rules. A poll on any of the above days may be rescheduled by the Chief Referendum Officer for some or all locations due to unforeseen circumstances as set out in the Referendum Rules. Polling centres will be established in each of the Cree communities, at the GCC(EI) offices in Montreal and Ottawa and at such other locations as the Referendum Committee may determine. For a complete list of all locations where polling centres will be established on these dates, and the specific address of each, consult the website of the GCC(EI) or call the toll free number listed at point 14 of this Notice.
11. As a third voting alternative, Eligible Voters whose place of residence is in a Cree community may request the attendance of a roving poll at their place of residence at any time from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (or such extended hours as may be ordered for any or all of these locations by the Chief Referendum Officer in accordance with the Referendum Rules) during roving poll days, which are from October 8, 2007 to October 12, 2007, both inclusive. In each locality where a roving poll will be available, the Local Referendum Officer for that locality will be posting notice of a local telephone number which may be called, on any of the roving poll days, to request attendance of the roving poll. These local numbers will also be posted on the website of the GCC(EI).
12. Following the announcement of the results of the Referendum, Eligible Voters will have five (5) calendar days to request a recount of the Referendum results. Such application must be supported by the signatures of at least fifteen (15) Eligible Voters, and contain the grounds for requesting the recount and any other relevant information. It must be received by the Chief Referendum Officer at the address indicated at point 13 of this Notice before the expiration of the said five-day period. Similarly, fifteen (15) Eligible Voters or more may request a review of the Referendum by the Referendum Committee by forwarding a written and signed request to the Chief Referendum Officer at the address indicated at the end of this Notice within fifteen (15) calendar days after the public announcement of the Referendum results, accompanied by a declaration, containing the grounds for requesting the review and other relevant information.
13. Questions and any matter addressed to the Chief Referendum Officer, Mr. Lawrence Jimiken, may be directed to him at the following postal address or phone/fax numbers: 1 Lakeshore Road Nemaska Quebec J0Y 3B0 telephone: (819) 673-2126; fax: (819) 673-2542; or by Email at: lawrjimi@hotmail.com.
14. Requests for mail-in ballot packages or for more information or for copies of the Agreement may be directed to Mr. Frederick Moar, Local Referendum Officer 81 Metcalfe Street, Suite 900, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6K7; toll-free telephone number: 1-888-761-1655; fax 1-613-761-1388; or by Email at: fred@chrd.ca.

Lawrence Jimiken, Chief Electoral Officer

Cheryl Tomatuk with Morgan and Sasha Avery Yuudin

The MoCreebec factor

Cheryl Tomatuk, 29, has a different take on the 10-year clause. As a member of MoCreebec, Tomatuk is well versed in the problems the clause has brought to the MoCreebec people.

The MoCreebec Council was created 27 years ago to address the needs of James Bay Crees who moved away from Quebec to Moose Factory. Some of the older generations were forced to attend the Horden Hall Residential School in Moose Factory and stayed there. Others went to the other side of the coast in search of jobs or a better life. These people, from places like Wemindji, Eastmain and Waskaganish, are called MoCreebec because of their continued cultural identification with the Quebec side of James Bay.

The MoCreebec Council launched a lawsuit against Canada, Quebec and the Grand Council a few years back, claiming the 10-year clause to be unjust and unfair. They wanted to be considered a part of the Crees of Eeyou Istchee, despite their geographic reality. The lawsuit came after the CSB started to apply the clause, section 3.2.7 of the JBNQA, to the letter. Anyone living off the territory for 10 years was ruled ineligible for CSB funding.

As a result of the clause, all MoCreebec members have been denied Cree Health Board and Cree School Board funding because they didn't meet the required six-month stay within the territory.

Because of their status, MoCreebec does not have the resources to build their own schools that teach Cree. Their economic reality is also much different than a federally recognized band under the Indian Act. They basically fend for themselves and are not given similar amounts of money to operate like other Native bands.

"When I initially pursued post-secondary education back in 1998, I was rejected by the CSB for not meeting the residency clause, which at the time was very ambiguous and inconsistent in each community," Tomatuk told *the Nation*. "I decided at that time that I had no other choice but to eventually move into what was considered Cree territory, as outlined in the JBNQA, so that I could be eligible for the education programming dollars that I felt I was entitled to. This decision involved relocating my family, leaving my home, my family and friends, to move to a new community, which was Waskaganish at the time, where I knew very few people."

Her educational background is impressive. She graduated from Trent University with a BA with honours in Native Studies. She was working on her MA in Canadian Studies when she was called by Grand Chief Mathew Mukash to be his Executive Assistant at the Grand Council. She will be studying law at the University of Ottawa in 2009 once her contract with the Grand Council is finished.

Tomatuk, whose grandfather Samuel decided to make Moose Factory his home in 1958, said that uprooting her family to meet residency requirements was hard, but she had a vision for her future that included a solid education. Despite the challenges that come with being a single mother of a beautiful daughter who is now 10 years old, Tomatuk kept moving forward. She also gave birth to a baby girl this past summer and is now facing a new set of challenges.

"The 10-year clause is also more than just an infringement on the right to access inherent benefits and rights under the JBNQA, it also causes a social stigma for people that are required to relocate and move their lives and families to new communities, and I believe it creates issues of acceptance," she said.

"People that make the decision to pursue different opportunities outside of the territory, whether it be for schooling, hockey or employment reasons to name a few, will be subject to the same section, and that is very restrictive and limiting."

Her sacrifice to get this far is fairly rare. Many of MoCreebec's members do not have her educational background. What should be seen as academic achievements to celebrate are often misconstrued by other Crees.

"In the past I know it has been perceived that people from Moose Factory are only there to get their funding, or are taking all the job opportunities when they arrive," said Tomatuk. "Empathizing with the fact we had to leave our homes to access these rights is not on the forefront of most people's perceptions. Individuals are just going through the loopholes required in order to access the same rights we all have as beneficiaries to the agreement. It just applies differently, in a discriminatory way, to people who live out of territory."

Some MoCreebec members don't even try to access the benefits they are entitled to, preferring instead to stay in Moose Factory.

"I have had family members receive offers of admission to post-secondary institutions but be rejected for post secondary funding because they live in Moose Factory, as it is not Cree territory," she said. "Some of my family members were also affected by the Cree School Board's interpretation of section 3.2.7 [of the JBNQA], whereby they met the residency clause and were approved for funding, but then cut off once CSB decided to change its criteria. The idea should be to educate as many of our people who show initiative."

Despite it all, Tomatuk wouldn't change a thing. She thinks that more information about their situation has to get out to the other communities so everyone can fully understand the difficulties that come with being a MoCreebec member.

"I love Eeyou Istchee, I like working and living there and returning there as often as I can. But the world is big. There are so many opportunities out there and life is about following your dreams and ambitions. If my children choose to live outside of Eeyou Istchee, they will be Cree no matter where they choose to reside or wherever their path in life takes them."

GCC Canada CRA/ARC

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Rupert River diversion
Hydro Quebec HQ hemmed in by demo

By Amy German

The movement to halt the diversion of the Rupert River gained strength September 14 with a massive protest in front of Hydro Quebec's headquarters in downtown Montreal. Protesters lined the block Hydro-Quebec occupies on Blvd. René-Lévesque, setting up stands to hold laundry lines that featured garments painted with messages such as "Save the Rupert."

The protest, which included various environmental groups from the US and Canada, symbolized the dirty laundry Hydro-Quebec is trying to hide: protesters claim that Hydro suppressed information that could have led to a different outcome in regards to diverting the Rupert for their latest multi-billion-dollar project to sell energy to the United Sates.

"Our goal here today is to have Hydro-Quebec recognize that they did not study the alternatives and we want the project to be stopped so that the alternatives can be studied," said Rupert Reverence spokesman Nicholas Boisclair.

"I don't think it's going to be easy to stop but we have to continue to denounce the lies of Hydro-Quebec," Boisclair added. "They said that there were no other alternatives and now we know that they hid a $4.5 billion wind energy project that would have resulted in less expensive kilowatt-hours than the project to divert the Rupert River."

Daniel Green of the Sierra Club said Hydro-Quebec is leading a massive disinformation campaign in the United States. "Today what is interesting is that our American friends have finally woken up and have understood the impact of this project. There is a myth going around that they are clean. When you ask an American, 'Why do you want to import large hydro?' They will say that it's clean energy, but it's clean compared to what? Coal? Coal emits mercury and I say, well, so does hydro."

Green said Hydro-Quebec has been touting its wares as a green product in the north eastern US. "Large hydro is dirty, large hydro is polluting, large hydro destroys fish habitats," said Green.

Among the many US organizations taking part in the protest, some were seeing shades of the past as a handful of them were simply returning to the spot they had protested in the 1990s when H-Q was trying to develop the Great Whale project.

Quoting Yogi Berra, American activist Doris Delaney of the group Protect said, "It's like deja-vu, all over again, being here. I am from Pennsylvania and I have been very active in James Bay issues for 25 years. And we think that damming the Rupert is just a terrible idea. We would like to see windmills so that is why we are here."

Hydro employees watched the protest with discomfort, slipping into and out of the building as quickly as possible while security guards whispered into their walkie-talkies. But some employees quietly joined the crowd to take in the various protest speeches that were delivered on a stage in front of the building.

Former Chisasibi Chief Abraham Rupert spoke about the community's anxiety over the project. "I am a little excited as to what the outcome might be, and how it's going to go but also to know that there are people out there in the south that support the Cree and oppose the diversion. The people of the Cree Nation need to know that there are people in the south that support them."

Rupert noted that the community of Chisasibi recently held its own referendum in regards to the Hydro project. "I think that says it all: 90 per cent of the people opposed it and said no to the diversion."

Rupert was delighted to see so many supporters from the US as they have the power to express their discontent to their own governments who are in control of where each state purchases its energy from. He wanted them to know the threat Chisasibi faces.

"There is an anxiety that hangs over the community about what if something happens. Anything that man creates can break down and that has been known to happen. Even Montreal was completely blacked out in the ice storm a few years ago."

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Lindy Moar

Doris Delaney and Abraham Rupert

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New tools to detect mining contamination

Conference offers solutions for Cree communities

By Will Nicholls

The Exploration 07 conference was only the Fifth Decennial International Conference on Mineral Exploration, even though the event is already 40 years old.

That's right: this conference is held only every 10 years. It is a forum for new developments in geophysics, geochemistry, remote sensing, data processing and integration. In short, the conference looks at the technological and commercial aspects of mining. This means everything from the first time they find the minerals to risk management.

It is of interest to the Cree because of the renewed interest in exploration and exploitation of Eeyou Istchee's mineral resources. From the Otish Mountains' uranium and gold finds to the Eastmain Resources potential, exploration is going ahead.

The conference not only deals with finding minerals but also with waste management and analysis. The same instruments used to find minerals can tell you what damage past mines have caused to the environment.

These instruments are found in an area of mineral exploration that was considered almost useless for decades but are now of interest because of advances in electrical geophysical systems. As a result they can not only map the mineral potentials but also tell you where to drill for water.

Another useful feature is that they can detect problems with embankment dams. In the case of Eeyou Istchee we would be looking at the retaining dikes – a useful tool considering the limited number of inspectors on Hydro-Quebec dams.

If problems are suspected and ignored, Crees could do their own testing to ensure the safety of communities and families living in the bush. All this can be done with just one type of instrument and its supporting equipment. Advantages include greater depth of investigation, better productivity by reducing the cost per cubic kilometre evaluated and less noise.

Two companies stood out: ABEM of Sweden and GPR Geophysics of Quebec.

ABEM has been in business since 1923 and is considered one of the leading manufacturers in the world of geophysical instruments.

ABEM has a long history of high quality geophysical equipment which can quickly and cost effectively solve a wide array of earth science problems. Much of the equipment ABEM manufactures also can be used to solve environmental problems. These instruments were originally designed for mineral exploration.

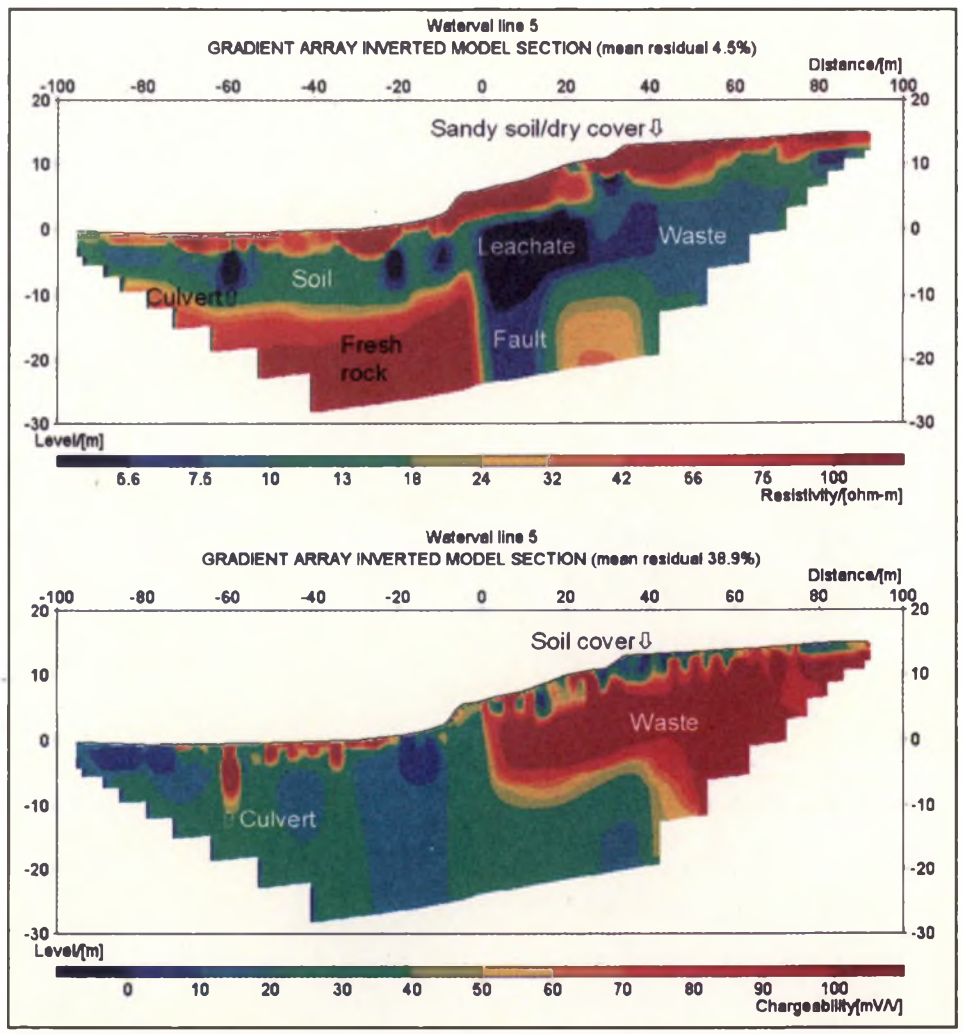
At the conference, Mats Thornelof of ABEM discussed with *the Nation* several case studies in which the ABEM equipment has successfully been used to identify the extent of buried waste accurately and successfully.

This process ends up saving thousands of dollars in environmental assessments. Thornelof also indicated ABEM's willingness to work with the Cree Nation to assist in the mine waste issues.

Renaud Robitaille, of GPR Geophysics located in Montreal, was also briefly interviewed regarding the mine waste contamination issue. GPR is well known and respected in the industry for its high-quality investigations of both contaminated waste sites and for mineral exploration.

Robitaillie agreed that ABEM equipment is top of the line, stating that GPR uses many ABEM instruments.

These tools can help clean the mess up fast in the sense they can give useful answers to some of the questions we have



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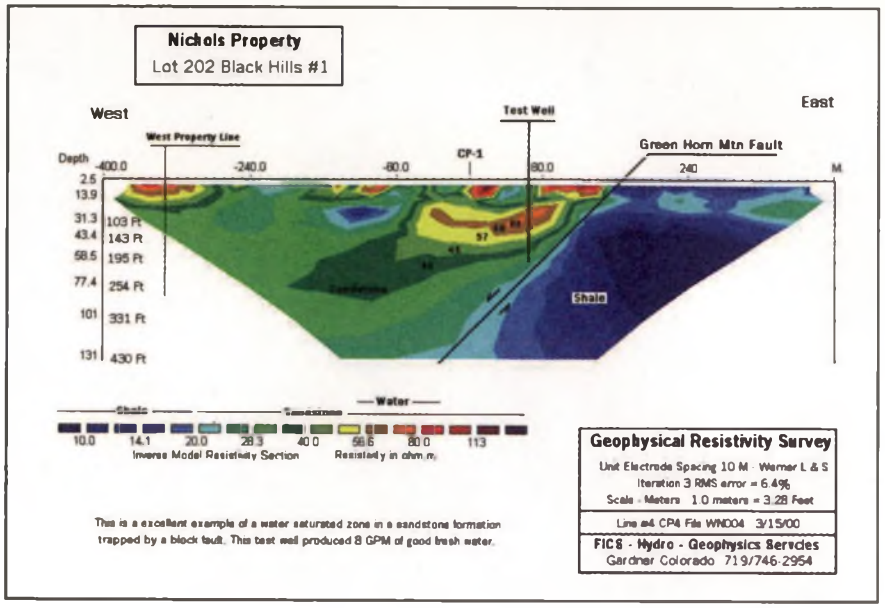
been asking. Resisitivity measurements will help to identify potentially contaminated sites but further work will be needed in order to clean up these sites. Preliminary studies wouldn't be as costly as with drilling bore holes.

The Terrameter package with a four channel imaging system with a depth penetration to 100 metres would cost in the area of $55,000 to do all the above but is well worth the investment. One borehole costs anywhere from $1,000 upwards in the tens of thousands so this instrument could pay for itself in very little time in pinpointing where you should drill for either mineral or freshwater exploration.

Thanks to Chris Covel for assisting in understanding the services, new equipment and their uses.



letters

Gangs in Eeyou Istchee

I live in Moose Factory and my relatives live in Wemindji. When reading your article, I think about them and their children. As a parent I have five children and my two oldest are 14 and 15 years old. I'm happy to say that they are alcohol free and have a bright future. Parents need to get involved with their kids and take the first steps of resolving this situation with gangs.

I grew up with alcohol abuse and gang problems in my community. I was part of the problem and living that way as a young person can really affect your outlook on life. I grew up living what I thought was the best way to live, not realizing the consequences of my actions, only to realize what was lost and nothing gained. It's a dead end street because you're only young once, and to regain what was lost, like your education, career, social standing (respect for others and you) will only prolong what's more important in your life, like family, friends, and a life driven with good ambitions.

I now have a family, and I don't want them to repeat what I did in my life. Today I don't drink. I live to be an example for my children and most importantly to live the life which I lost. I took the long road, but I'm thankful I woke up in time to change the trend and not allow this in my children. The biggest influence you can be in someone's life is when they are young. Parents have that opportunity to change the outcome in their children's lives for the better. It's never too late. When they're older, there's still hope for change. How do I know this? That change happened in my life and I know it could happen in anybody's life.

Leaders, community members, and most importantly parents need to be involved with young people. It starts in the home where leaders are made then you become a member who leads, and then community leaders that become leaders. They need examples in the home, community and the leadership. In closing, I encourage you all to do your best to reach the young people. If we are not the examples, somebody else will be their example...

RE: Gangs

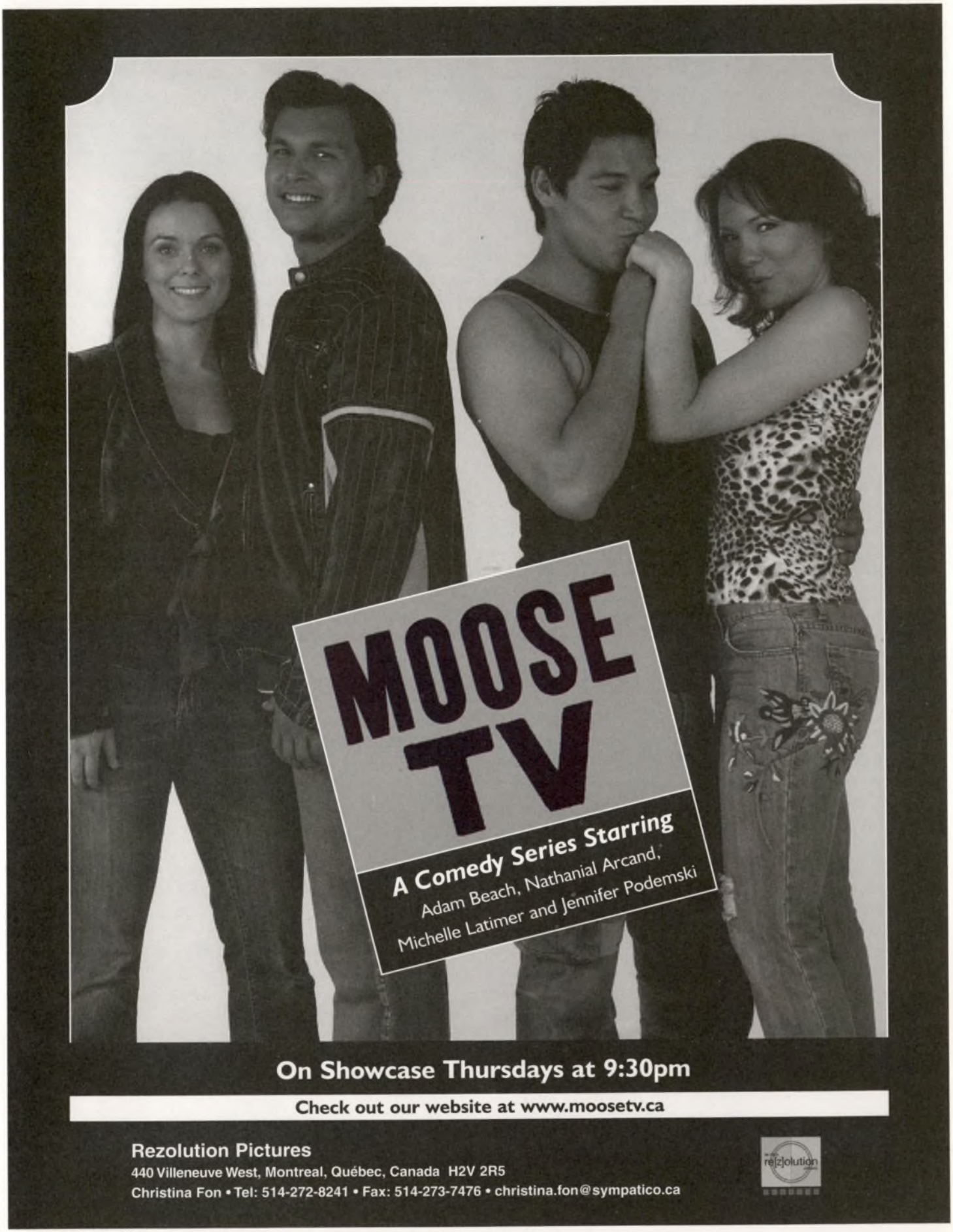
I am not surprised to hear gangs are present in Eeyou Istchee. As a matter of fact I have seen many signs from many youth, painted on walls or just the way they communicate with each other. I agree something should be done about this problem before it becomes a criminal issue for our nation.

So many times I see children and youth act like they are "African American," calling themselves "dawgs" and "niggas" and so forth. They consider this to be cool and paints an image for themselves. My message for these children and youth is: "If you want to be cool, be proud of whom you really are, and that's a Cree. Being Cree and proud and showing off your "true" identity is cool, not to be someone who you never will be and that's African American.

I know the children and youth who follow these acts get their behaviour from what they see in music videos and violent movies.

I have also noticed many children and youth today value the "labels" of clothing they wear. By this I mean the clothing they wear is being worn by "gangstas" and they feel this is cool. I am not against what people wear but I would advise parents to be careful in what they "label" their children with. This kind gesture of buying your "capable-of-providing-for-himself/herself teenager" should learn the hard knock of "paying for what you want lesson." On too many occasions the youth are showing off what their parents buy them and not what they have rightfully earned. All this so-called "bling" is also being worn by "gangstas, pimps and dawgs." This sort of labeling should not be promoted by any Cree parent.

My final thought on gang-related issues: If we do not do anything about the destructiveness of these small groups they will continue to grow and become a menace to our society.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UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

Wild garden of memories

by Xavier Kataquapit

There is a jumble of images, sounds and moments I remember from my childhood. Yet I am sometimes surprised at how a distant moment in time can appear in sharp focus in my mind. From time to time a memory will suddenly awaken in me when I hear a song or a sound. When you think about it there are few things that remain constant in our lives. In my case plants, wild flowers and the living landscape are full of images that bring my childhood to life again.

I recently came across a familiar grass like plant that I had forgotten about. This plant is known as Foxtail Barley. It is a tall grass plant, with a bushy like head that droops to one side. It appears commonly in a greyish blue and also a tinge of red. This wild grass grows in open fields especially where the topsoil has disappeared and it has been replaced by human activity with exposed clay or gravel. During the active building and development of Attawapiskat in the late 70s and early 80s, there was plenty of bulldozing and earth moving, leaving open ground for wild Foxtail Barley.

During the late summer, my friends and I played in the open areas around our school. I remember walking by fields of this plant spread about the bleak terrain surrounding our school. When this plant bloomed in the warm days of August, the fine filaments of grass came in reds, blues and greens. At their height, they shimmered in the bright summer sun as they swayed to the motion of the wind thus creating waves of colours. By the time we started school in the early fall the tufts had seeded and turned to yellow bristles that blew in the wind.

In those days in Attawapiskat the moist and undrained soils of our neighbourhood harboured all sorts of strange looking plant life. Wild grasses dominated but on the dry exposed clay and gravel walkways there grew batches of short, heavy, stemmed plants, with small leaves and heads that ended in cone shaped yellow balls. Now I realize this interesting plant was a Pineapple Weed. The image of this wonderful earthy weed takes me back to my backyard or my neighbourhood where my friends and I crawled around on the earth and clay to play our games of hide and seek and as well we created small communities of roadways for our hot wheel cars.

In amongst the grass and Pineapple Weed was another strange looking plant. This short plant was a sprout of broad leaves and upright floweret spikes, which is referred to as the Common Plantain or known in southern Native folklore as White-Man's Foot. As it turns out, this plant is an alien species that was brought over from Europe.

Early Native people knew it as a foreign species and every time they saw it, they realized that Europeans had visited the area. The seeds of this hearty plant are wet and sticky and easily attach to the boots of men or the hoofs of animals. It is no wonder the White Man's Foot effortlessly made the trip overseas to our part of the world. Of course when I was a child playing on the land I had no idea of the stories of the plants and trees.

My friends and I explored the entire community together and we spent a lot of time by the riverbank. Near the church and hospital are a series of deep gullies carved out to drain the community. These deep ditches were home to all sorts of species of wild plants.

One dominant plant we enjoyed was White Yarrow. This tall plant has a heavy stalk and numerous branches that end in clusters of white flowers. In the early fall when these plants had grown over two meters and they were at their end, we played with the heavy stalks and used them as swords in play fights with each other. They were perfect play toys as a hard swing easily broke apart the stalk instead of the intended target.

One evening, we collected the stalks of yarrow and stuffed the hollow branches with wild grass. We knelt down in the tall grass, hidden away from the prying eyes of adults and we lit up our homemade Yarrow and wild grass cigars. Our parents had warned us never to smoke but like any young group of boys we dared to defy our elders. We taunted each other to puff our huge two foot long cigars. As the first one choked on the foul smoke, we had to fulfill our challenges to each other and soon we were all rolling around the grass in coughing fits.

Now, whenever I see the tall stalks of White Yarrow, I am reminded just how much I don't like two foot long Yarrow and grass cigars and of course I smile when I think of that scene long ago.

Whenever I step into the forest, drive on a highway lined with wild flowers or walk into a field of weeds it brings back a whole set of memories from my past. Back home in Attawapiskat nobody ever planted a garden as Mother Earth took care of that chore for us. These days I like the idea of cultivating plants and I am getting pretty good at it. Still, nothing beats a walk down a trail in the nearby forest. I stop to smell the roses. Wild ones, of course.

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Deadline - Oct. 17/07

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See also the C.H.R.D.'s Cree Employment Officer (C.E.O.) in your community to arrange your allowances.

For more information
please call 1-866-921-4040
and ask for Nancy Mianscum or Luc Collette.

CLASSIFIEDS

BIRTHS – 100

We would like to congratulate Natasha Diamond and Mario Katapatuk on the birth of their baby boy, Nahshon Ricardo Wilson Katapatuk. He was born on the 28th of August at 7:07 pm weighing at 8 lbs and 10 1/2 oz. Right on great-uncle's birthday too. So u gotta name the baby after his great uncle now! lol...jk Hope to meet ur new bundle of joy soon. And take good care of your lil' blessing. Sending lots of hugs and kisses from Germain, Angela, Treasure, Benjamin, Kimora & Kimisha in Wask.

BIRTHDAYS – 101

Happy birthday to our baby sister Justina on Sept. 21, 2007. She will be turning three years old. Hope you have fun celabrating your birthday!!! We love you boodoona!! Fr: Justin and Justine.

I want to wish my baby girl a Happy Birthday on Sept. 21, 2007. Happy 3rd Birthday Justina! I LUV YA LOTS!!!!! Hope you have a blast on your special day!! And again Happy Birthday Sweetie! From, Mummy.

Happy Belated Birthday to Linda Whiskeychan on Sept.05, 2007. Happy Birthday buddy!!! Fr: Norma.

Wishing a friend of mine a Happy belated birthday to Jo! on September 01, 2007.Hope you had a great day! Fr: Norma.

I would like to wish a Happy Birthday to my boyfriend, Rocky Mowatt on Sept. 13. I wanted to say that I love you so much and I wanna thank you for being there for me and my boys. Once again, Happy Birthday my love and take care. P.S. I'll be thinking of you. Love always, Angela, Justin and Mason Diamond. xxx I love you.

Birthday - September 22th. I want to wish a Happy Belated Birthday to my dear husband Jean- Marc Wapachee you are very special to me and the children. We are proud of you that you are working so hard and supporting your family and that you got a new job. Yeah! Time to time we miss but in the end it is all worth it, when you come home. We love you Happy Birthday again xoxoxo. From your wife and kids.

Wishing two birthday greetings, to my big l'il brother Raymond Kanatewat on October 7/07. And to my chubby nephew Darius Robert Miyobino Moar on October 15/07. Enjoy your birthdays boys!!! I'm sure Mom/googoom will bake her famous & delicious cake for you guys...lol:) Luv ya both! Judy

A special birthday wish going out to a sweet little girl named Iesha Kaydence Brien. Happy 1st birthday on October 9th. We look forward to your many visits to our home and the mess you leave behind. Your favorite snack, brown bread, will always be here when you come for visits...We thank God for blessing us with yet another addition to our many grandchildren..With much love and prayers, (the great ones)...great-grandma Mary Mattawashish and the rest at 91 Mist. Blvd.

Happy 1st Birthday to our sweet little angel, Iesha Kadence Brien, born on October 9th. Last Thanksgiving morning, you were born and that was the best gift we had that year. Every day, we thank God for this gift to us and we enjoy every moment we have with you. We love you and lots of hugs and kisses to you! From: Grandpa & Grandma Brien

Happy 6th Birthday to our Son (Brother) Roman Georgekish, on September 26th, Get ready for hockey season, Love always Mom, Dad , and your brothers; Jean-Claude, Conway & Yanic (WEMINDJI).

Sending belated birthday greetings to my brother Darnell on Sept 3 and to my niece Celicia on Sept 13. Hey, hope you kids had fun on your special day. Especially Darnell, I'm sure you're having so much fun with your new game wii. I think I'll give it a try sometime. Have fun and don't break your game or your T.V, and for you Celicia hope you had fun with your friends on your pizza party. I'm sure you didn't want boys allowed on your party but it's too bad you will always have them and they will be your body guards when they get older especially Dawson..LOL Again, wish you both a happy birthday and many more to come!! Love, your sister/Aunty Cheryl (Wask.)

Wishing a happy belated birthday to our son, Dawson Whiskeychan on Sept 15. Time sure flies by so fast. It was 6 years ago that God blessed us with you, you were so small when

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you were born and now look at you, you're big and so strong..I thank God every day for you. Once again, Happy birthday my baby boy. We love you so much...Love, mom and dad (Cheryl & Leonard).

Two years ago, I was blessed with a little girl for me to love and nuture. I had gone through 3 miscarriages before and I call her my miracle baby sent down from heaven for me to love. I named her Melissa after her dad's cousin. She'll be turning 2 on September 15 and it's going so fast. I will love you forever from your mother Dina.xoxoxoxox

I want to send birthday greetings to the following people: Melissa Matoush on Sept.15th, Joanne Sept. 22nd, Tommy Sept.26, Nicholas Sept.27 and Louise Sept.30. In October there's Albert on the 5th, Austin on the 16th and Sean bimansh on Oct.29th. With lots of love from your mom, sister and auntie Dina from Mistissini.

Another year has come and gone. It's going to be another birthday for my sweet little angel that God gave me two years ago. Her name is Melissa Faith Trinity and her birthday is September 15th. You are the light of my life and now I know my purpose on earth was to be your mother. I love you so much and now that you are learning to talk, you are even more fun that ever. Love from your mommy and daddy (Dina and Richard).

To mon oncle Allen Junior. Just wanted to say Happy 12th Birthday and I really enjoyed eating your cake. I love you even though I get you in trouble at times, but I don't mean it. Love always Gookum's munshkin DEVON (and yours too of course) xoxox

On Sept.11-1995, you were brought into my life and I named you: Allen Junior Derrick Neeposh-Desgagne and already you are 12 years old .....sah, Time goes by fast. If it wasn't for your late brother Scott being there for me and your sister, things would be so different. When I was pregnant with you, he took responsibility for the entire household, because I was put to bedrest for a whole month. He was the man of the house, and now you are. So I just wanted to let you know how special you are to me and I hope you enjoyed your day as much as I did. Happy 12th Birthday my baby and many more to come. Even though I'm not always around I'm with you at heart. Love you with all of me, your mom Caroline xoxox.

To my little brother, Allen Junior Neeposh-Desgagne, I know it's been tough since we suddenly lost our oldest brother Scott, but I promise I'll try and keep my promise to him, which was to protect you no matter what the situation. You are now my only brother and I will always try and be nicer to you...lol. Anyways I also wanted to wish you a Happy Birthday, I know you u had lots of fun, especially raising all that money for your sleepover. Hope you enjoyed your day as much as I enjoy having you around. Always remember that I am there for you no matter what. I love you and may you have many wishes that come true because you are a dream come true to me. Love always and forever, your Sister Wilmalee (Wasw.)

Birthday greetings going out to my niece, Jacie Ryanne Wapachee. I hope you enjoyed your birthday with your friends. Happy 7th Birthday Jace and many many more to come. Love & Prayers: Auntie Brenda-Rose W. Jolly.

Happy 10th Birthday to my daughter, Patricia Angel Jolly. We wish you the best in school and may the good Lord bless you throughout the year and always. Love always; Mom & Dad xoxox

ANNIVERSARIES – 103

Wishing a Happy 30th wedding Anniversary to Stanley & Doreen Shashaweskum on September 21st, and many more to come. With love, hugs & kisses: Diana, Brendan, Faith, Sabrina & Isaac.

Happy 3rd Anniversary to Bob & Joyce Diamond on Sept. 20 from Pikogan. May you have many more anniversaries. And to my parents, Eva & Basile Diamond for their 40th Anniversary on August 26th, and Happy Birthday to Yolanda Shash on August 29th. One more year you'll be a teenager Yolly. We love you all! From Angela, Justin & Mason Diamond. P.S. May God be with you.

Happy 6th Anniversary to my Hubby Wasesguin Gunner on October 6th/2007 and many more to come. I want you to know that I'm still very much in love with you (always). Carole xoxox P.S. I'm expecting a nice (expensive) gift from you...lol.....and I LOVE YOU.

PERSONAL MESSAGES - 300

I am an antiques collector. I need to know if anyone in the Cree Nation has any old dishes, cups, furniture etc. I collect almost everything. Leave me an email message, and a pic of your articles if possible, and of course the price of what you are selling. Email address: sheshamush_@msn.com

GRADUATION – 301

No more school work, huh? Well at least not until college...Joyce, wherever the future may lead you, may you always have the wisdom and strength to follow your dreams, the courage and ambition to meet new challenges. Congratulations & Best Wishes, I'm so proud of you my friend!! Love in friendship, DiAnA BoNeZ.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS - 400

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This poem goes out to our Grandpa Alfred Trapper, who passed away on August 3rd, 2007.

Goodbye
I'm sorry that we didn't have time to say
goodbye to you,
There's not a day that we don't think of you,
We miss you Joomshoom.
We miss you around us
We miss you laugh
We miss you smile
There's nothing we can do but we try
hard to control our hearts.
You shine like sparkles in the winter,
And your smile spreads like the wind.
We miss you so much and
You'll always be in our hearts.

Love Lindy, Leona, and Simon-Peter
Goodbye our Joomshoom... someday we will meet again.

Poem written by Leona Trapper Gull

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